

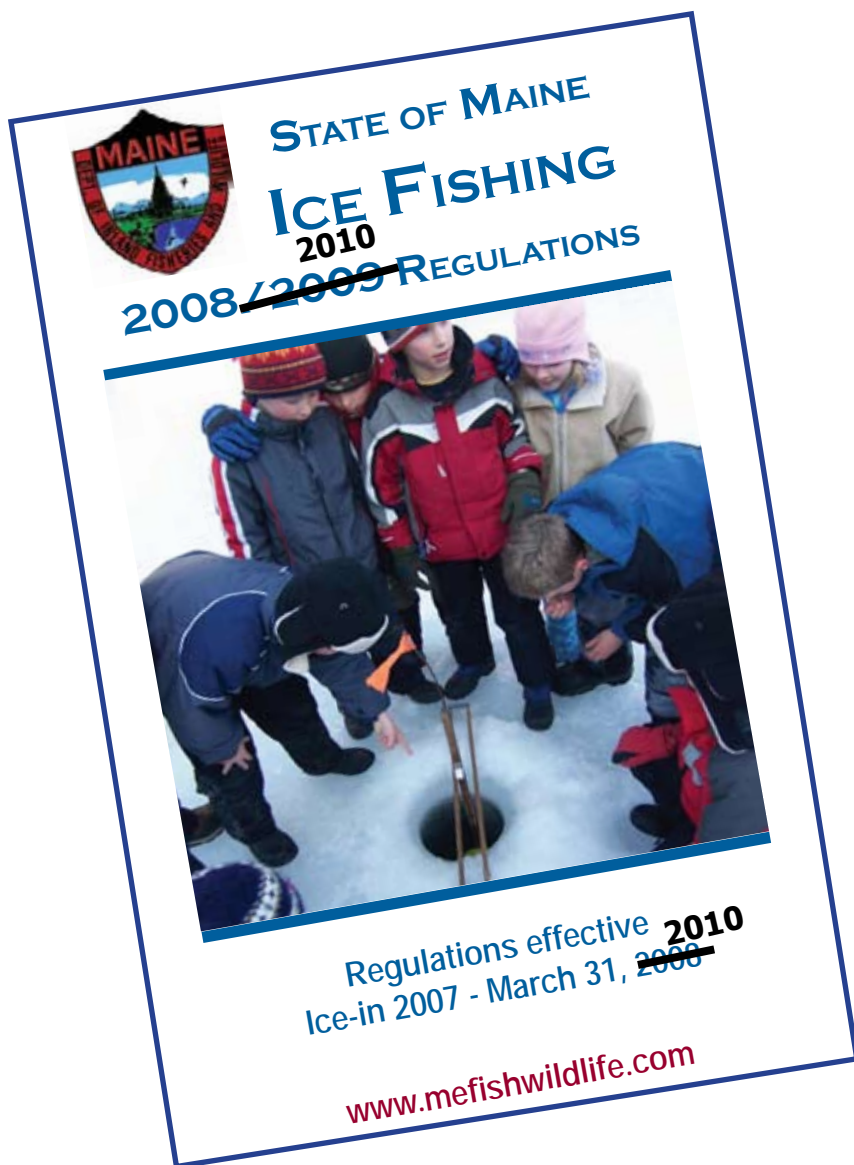


IF&W

2009 Ice Fishing Report



Jan.
15
2009



THIS ONE'S STILL THE ONE

The regulations in last season's Ice Fishing Law Book, shown above, are in effect this year and through March 31, 2010.

Inside



Southern Maine

Ice conditions in southern Maine have continued to improve.

Central Maine

We're evaluating the effectiveness of stocking large fall yearling brook trout to provide winter fisheries.

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Anglers catching colorful brook trout at several "magnet waters."

Western Mountains

The ice fishing season at Spring Lake is off to a slow start.

Moosehead Lake

Most areas are safe with 12-16 inches of ice.

Penobscot

Reports are that ice is safe and the fishing has been fair to excellent.

Aroostook County

Realty Road from Six-Mile Gate to 21-mile currently is not being plowed.



IF&W Ice Fishing Report

SOUTHERN MAINE

1/15/09

By Francis Brautigam
Regional Fisheries Biologist
Gray

Ice conditions in southern Maine have continued to improve since Jan. 1. Some of the smaller- to medium-sized ponds are covered in a blanket of ice 8 or more inches thick. Cold temperatures have thickened the ice on lakes that "buttoned up" early, but persistent winds have delayed ice formation on the region's largest lakes, including Sebago.

Cold weather and windy conditions appears to account for the overall lighter-than-anticipated early season angler turn out observed and reported on many area lakes and ponds. Although, that said, some bait retailers have reported brisk bait sales.

I recently spoke with one angler who fished for bass with his son opening weekend. The wind was so strong that one of his ice fishing traps was propelled at such a high speed it traveled clear to the other side of the lake and could not be recovered.

A few of our project waters



Michael Latti holds a 4-pound largemouth caught in southern Maine.

surveyed this winter have produced slower fishing so far this season, including Crystal Lake (Gray) and Sabbathday Lake (New Gloucester). Ironically these two lakes produced outstanding early season action last winter under the same stocking programs. Most of the 2009 angler

reports from other waters have been very favorable, especially those targeting brook trout. Waters including Keoka Lake, Bear Pond, Otter Ponds, Center Pond, and Thomas Pond have produced very good early season action for 12- to 14-inch brook trout, including some double digit catches.

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IF&W Ice Fishing Report

CENTRAL MAINE

1/15/09

By James Lucas

Assistant Regional Fisheries Biologist
and Joe Dembeck
Research Fisheries Biologist
Sidney

This is the second winter we have focused on evaluating the effectiveness of stocking large fall yearling brook trout to provide winter fisheries in waters that lack the habitat to provide over summer survival. Although successful anglers have certainly been happy with their catches, the results of last winter's surveys indicated that approximately 16 percent of the brook trout stocked were harvested during the first winter. Since many of the surviving trout will not survive through the following summer, returns to anglers will have to improve if we to maintain this program.

Biologists from our research unit in Bangor also have been conducting surveys at Biscay Pond where anglers reported nice catches of brook trout, splake, brown trout, smallmouth bass, and white perch. A group of anglers surveyed by the research biologists caught and released two brown trout, one 18 inches and the other 24 inches in length! Anglers report many of the fish they are keeping are full



A catch of brook trout from a Sagadahoc County lake.

of smelts. Though many anglers were fishing Nequasset Lake this weekend most reported the fishing to be slow for brook trout and rainbow trout.

We have some good fishing for other species, as well as for brook trout. Lake St George and Parker Pond have been very good fishing for

salmon and brook trout. We have also received reports of good rainbow trout fishing in Lake George, Canaan. Large pike have been recently caught at North Pond in the Smithfield. Some humpback white perch are beginning to show in Great Pond, Belgrade.

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IF&W Ice Fishing Report

DOWNEAST

1/15/09

By Rick Jordan

Regional Fisheries Biologist
Downeast Region

Anglers in eastern Maine's Hancock and Washington counties are catching colorful brook trout at several "magnet waters" where stocking and management is designed to create winter fisheries for trout from 7 to 18 inches.

Regional Fisheries Biologist Rick Jordan said, "we chose ponds with good access and adjusted our stocking plans to add 12- to 14-inch fall yearling brook trout to more numerous stockings of 6- to 9-inch fall fingerling trout. In addition, many of these ponds were stocked with retired 16- to 18-inch adult brook trout that had been used as brood stock in our hatcheries." The management goal in the magnet waters is to attract families to fish together as well as to interest new anglers in fishing by offering good catch rates for a variety of fish sizes. The program is gaining in popularity, and anglers are enjoying the action.

Anglers wishing to fish these waters can go to Craig Pond in Or-



Downeast angler with a beautiful brook trout.

land, Lower Hadlock Pond in Orland, Keene's Lake in Calais, Indian Lake in Whiting, Montegail Pond in Twp 19 MD, or Keeley Lake in Marshfield. In addition, Foxhole Pond in Deblois is stocked with trout from 6 to 18 inches long and is open to kids only under the age of 16. The pond is located 0.2 mile east of Route 193 opposite

the Deblois airstrip.

For anglers hoping to catch salmon now that ice thicknesses have exceeded 12 inches, proven producers are Cathance Lake in Cooper, Brewer Lake in Orrington, Molasses Pond in Eastbrook, and Long Pond in Mount Desert. West Grand Lake is closed until Feb. 1.

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1/15/09



IF&W Ice Fishing Report

WESTERN MOUNTAINS

By Dave Howatt

Fishery Biologist Specialist
Rangeley Region

The ice fishing season at Spring Lake, where we stocked 500 large fall-yearling brook trout and 100 salmon this past fall, is off to a slow start. So far, the cold and windy conditions have kept anglers away, but the hardy few that have fished the lake have had good fishing for brook trout and lake trout. Most of the togue, however, are running thin and fifty percent of the total catch is below the 14-inch minimum length limit. Anglers fishing Clearwater Pond and Porter Lake report catches of brook trout, salmon, and togue. Crowell and Norcross Ponds and Webb Lake continue to reward anglers with excellent action and 12- to 15-inch brook trout.



A great way for youngsters to spend a winter afternoon.

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IF&W Ice Fishing Report

MOOSEHEAD LAKE

1/15/09

By Tim Obrey

Regional Fisheries Biologist
Greenville

The ice fishing season is in full swing in the Moosehead Lake Region as the cold temperatures firm up the ice on the lakes and ponds in the area. While anglers must always take care while traveling on the ice, most areas up this way are safe with 12-16 inches of ice. The snowmobile trails in the Moosehead Lake – Jackman area are in great shape thanks to the cold temperatures and fresh snow.

Corey Hegarty of Sally Mountain Cabins in Jackman reports that the fishing on Big Wood Pond and Little Big Wood Pond has been terrific so far this winter. Anglers are catching nice colorful splake in the 16-17 inches range along with salmon mostly in the 14-16 inches range but with a few as big as 18 inches. It sounds like the smelts may be biting too for the anglers that know where to jig on Big Wood Pond. Corey reports that the cusk fishing on Little Big Wood Pond has been really good with one lucky angler getting a 9 ½ lb fish. That will make enough chowda' for the rest of the winter!

We checked a number of anglers on Moosehead Lake this weekend. The anglers in the Rockwood area were picking up a number of the smaller togue that are available for harvest. We also saw a few brook



The Morin clan of Parkman with a nice pickerel and brookie from Drummond Pond

trout on the ice this weekend. January is typically the best month of the ice fishing season for catching brook trout. Folks are still just getting their ice shacks out and we anticipate the fishing activity to pick up over the next few weeks. Don't forget that the Second Annual Moosehead Lake Togue Derby is scheduled for Jan. 30-Feb. 1. Be sure to pick up your tickets at Indian Hill Trading Post, Kineo Flies, Moosehead Bait and Tackle, Northwoods Outfitters, or the Chamber of Commerce's Visitor Center. Derby ticket sales end at 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 31. There will be lots of great prizes including \$1,500 for the best togue.

Some young anglers were taking

advantage of the good weather to fish Drummond Pond in Abbot. This pond is open to fishing for children under the age of 16 in the winter months and is right on Rte. 15, so access is easy. We stocked this little gravel pit pond with fall yearling brook trout and a few retired brood-stock brook trout this fall. There are also a few pickerel and perch in the pond which helps to keep the flags flying. We want to thank the local folks that keep the parking lot plowed so the kids can have a nice place to get out of the wind and fish. Attached is a photo of some very successful Guilford/Parkman anglers with a nice pickerel and brookie from this past Saturday. Nice catch!

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IF&W Ice Fishing Report

PENOBSCOT

1/15/09

By Richard Dill

Regional Fisheries Biologist
Bangor

With nearly two weeks of the 2009 ice fishing season in the books, the reports from around the Penobscot Region are that ice is safe and the fishing has been fair to excellent. Waters stocked with fall yearling brook trout including Molunkus Lake, Upper Cold Stream Pond, Cold Stream Pond, and Upper Pond having been giving up good catches of fish on most days.

Salmon are biting at Pleasant Lake in Island Falls and East Grand Lake. However, anglers fishing in the eastern part of the region (West, Duck, Nictaus and Spring lakes) report that the salmon fishing has been a bit slow this year so far, but many believe that this is due to noise of the ice forming on lakes. Due to the recent cold snap and lack of snow the ice is building quickly and creating quite a racket out there. Hopefully once things settle down, the fish will start biting.

Both Schoodic Lake and Cold Stream Pond now have 6-10 inches of ice across the entire lake. I suspect lake trout enthusiasts will start pulling their ice shacks out to the deeper waters this week in hopes of catching a "lunker" togie. East Grand Lake continues to produce a quality lake trout fishery, and in recent years we've been hearing about some good sized cusk as well.

Regional personnel conducted creel checks this past weekend at Lower Sysladobsis Lake (Dobsis), Junior Lake, Scraggly Lake and Pleasant Lake, all located close to the Penobscot/Washington County line in Lakeville, Pukakon and Kossuth



Young anglers take to Pickerel Pond for the Maine Youth and Game Club's annual ice fishing event last weekend.

Townships. With ice thickness varying between 10 and 14 inches, ice shacks are sprouting up everywhere throughout the project area. Nice sunny weather and low wind brought good numbers of anglers looking for salmon, whitefish, lake trout and white perch. Anglers on Dobsis iced a number of salmon, mostly 3 year olds in the 16- to 17-inch category. Lake whitefish were the primary focus at Junior, with a couple fish hitting the 17-inch mark. A few togie also were reportedly taken from Junior in the first week of the season. Scraggly provided white perch action for a number of parties, as well as an occasional migrant salmon from fish stocked in Junior. Pleasant only had a couple of groups, but all had fast action for salmon in the 16- to 19-inch range. All anglers interviewed were having fair to good success, and most importantly, were having a great day out on the ice.

Finally, this past weekend the Maine Youth Fish and Game Club held



its annual ice fishing event at Pickerel Pond. Nearly 200 young anglers participated this year, with many handsome fish being caught over the course of the day. While waiting for the flags to fly, the youngsters ate hot dogs, drank hot chocolate and took turns sliding down the hill out onto the pond.

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IF&W Ice Fishing Report

AROOSTOOK COUNTY

1/15/09

By Derrick Cote

Fishery Biology Specialist
Ashland

Traditionally, anglers seeking to ice fish the Musquacook Lakes area of the Allagash region used the Realty Road from Ashland. However, the Realty Road from Six-Mile Gate to 21-mile is not currently being plowed. Anglers should access the Realty Road at 21-mile across the Rocky Brook Road and South Branch Road, which lie to the north of the Realty Road. As always, extreme caution is necessary when using these roads which are maintained and plowed for forest management including the transport of wood products with large trucks.

The Fish River Lakes of Long, Cross, Square and Eagle Lakes have had for decades a shortened season from that of general law. January 15 was a traditional "opening day" on these waters for years; 2009 marks a major change in season length, 2 months to 3 months. Biologists from Ashland checked anglers on Long Lake on the new opening day recently, as well as Saturday, Jan. 2. These days proved to be brutally cold with low temperatures and high winds; despite the conditions anglers were out in force. We measured more



A beautiful Aroostook County Landlocked Salmon.

than 30 trout and salmon, the largest of which was 5 lbs 10 oz. Numerous shacks dot the shoreline of Long Lake; these shelters provide some protection from the elements as well as a means to fish for rainbow smelt, the primary forage for salmon and trout, and a highly sought after game fish as well. These shacks commonly have long cut-out "race-ways",

providing a wide view under the ice. Sit at one of these "holes" for just a short time and you'll likely see some of the huge schools of smelt for which Long is famous. On these days we were out, patient anglers were seeing numerous salmon swim by the holes in shacks, a sign that fishing will get better as the season progresses.

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